

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-7-06

SPONSOR King LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 734

SHORT TITLE TORRANCE COUNTY COPS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Hadwiger

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$300.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)  
Public Education Department (PED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 734 appropriates \$300 thousand from the general fund to the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in FY07 for four more Torrance county sheriff's deputies for the Cops in Schools program.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$300 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY07 would revert to the general fund.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DFA reported that, according to the Torrance County Sheriff's Office, four deputies were hired in 2001 with funding obtained from the federal Cops in Schools (CIS) program. CIS provides up to \$125,000 per officer position for salary and benefit costs. CIS funding is no longer available to Torrance County, and the county doesn't have sufficient budget to retain the officers. The County is planning to lay off the four deputies. This appropriation will keep the deputies em-

ployed. The County currently has ten full-time deputies and one part-time deputy, who are responsible for all of Torrance County, which is 4,500 square miles. The Sheriff's Department responds to over 1,600 calls each month. The Department currently receives an average of four domestic violence calls each day. Two deputies are required to respond to each domestic violence call. If four deputies are laid off, the county will have only six full-time deputies to service Torrance County.

DFA noted that it will probably be two years before Torrance County can support these four positions with local revenues.

DFA/LGD commented that Torrance County is suffering financial hardship to the point that a reduction in force county-wide is possible. Much of this hardship is a result of detention costs. The County is currently funding most of the deputies' salaries and benefits from general fund transfers. The County has already transferred \$216,455 from the general fund to keep these four particular deputies employed. The County could potentially be looking at a reduction in force for all of its employees to compensate for the budgetary shortages. If these deputies are employed through an appropriation, the County will most certainly not be able to carry the costs post-appropriation. The annual budgeted amount for these four "Cops in Schools" deputies is \$155,242, including all salary and benefits. The requested appropriation is \$300,000, which would be a 48 percent increase.

PED identified the following benefits from HB734:

- The presence of officers can create a bridge between law enforcement and young people of all ages— teaching them that the police are the good guys and are there to help.
- On-site protection for schools
- For the school year 03-04, Moriarty schools reported a total of 637 incidents. (Safe Schools report for New Mexico Schools 2003-2004)
  1. 1 Firearm
  2. 23 reports of vandalism
  3. 437 incidents with illegal substance
  4. 176 reports of violence
- For the school year 04-05, Moriarty schools reported a total of 257 incidents. (Safe Schools report for New Mexico Schools 2004-2005)
  1. 0 Firearms
  2. 20 reports of vandalism
  3. 147 incidents with illegal substance
  4. 90 reports of violence

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

PED noted that, if passed, HB734 could affect crime rates in Torrance County schools and positively impact school attendance and graduation rates.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

This appropriation will be administered by the Local Government Division of DFA, who has the capacity to fund and monitor this project.

**TECHNICAL ISSUES**

DFA suggested that the language referring to the Cops in Schools program be deleted, because this is a reference to a federal grant program, for which funding in Torrance County has expired.

DH/mt